SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR SYNCHRONIZING THE OPERATION OF MULTIPLE REMOTE RECEIVERS IN A BROADCAST ENVIRONMENT

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The system and method stores event data, including timing data associated with each event referenced against a reference time, in an index table within the memory of an integrated receiver decoder (IRD) such as a set-top-box. The event data is typically transmitted in advance of a broadcast signal received by the IRD and stored within IRD memory in anticipation of the broadcast program. The reference time is generated by any one of a variety of different means, such as by time date table, time plus offset table, or within a data (e.g. MPEG) stream. Time relative to the reference time, where the reference time can be periodically reset to accommodate interruptions or changes in the original broadcast programming to which the events are synchronized, are compared to the event times stored in memory. If a match occurs, the event triggers at that appropriate relative time. This event data, alone or in conjunction with additional transmitted triggering data, is compared to a reference timing signal generated by one of several means. This combination of data is then used to control the local execution of the application on each IRD.